

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Currently Amended) A system for obtaining information relating to a

propagation velocity at which a pulse wave propagates along an artery of a living subject, the system comprising:

a heart-sound detecting apparatus ~~according to claim 1~~; comprising:

a heart-sound microphone which detects a plurality of heart sounds produced by a heart of a living subject and outputs a heart-sound signal representative of the detected heart sounds;

a smoothing device ~~for~~ smoothing, by differentiation, a waveform of the heart-sound signal output from the heart-sound microphone;

a squaring device ~~for~~ squaring an amplitude of the smoothed waveform with respect to a base line of the heart-sound signal; and

a start-point determining device ~~for~~ determining a start point of a first heart sound I as one of the plurality of detected heart sounds, based on that the squared amplitude being greater than a prescribed threshold value;

a pulse-wave detecting device which is adapted to be worn on the subject to detect the pulse wave which propagates along the artery of the subject; and

a pulse-wave-propagation-velocity-relating-information obtaining ~~means~~ device ~~for~~ obtaining said-information based on a time of the start point of the first heart sound I determined by the start-point determining ~~means~~ device of the heart-sound detecting

apparatus, and a time when a rising point of the pulse wave is detected by the pulse-wave detecting device.]

5. (Currently Amended) A-The system according to claim 4, wherein the pulse-wave-propagation-velocity-relating-information obtaining ~~means device~~, comprises:
 _____ a pulse-wave-propagation-time determining ~~means device~~ for determining, based on the time of the start point of the first heart sound I, and the time when the rising point of the pulse wave is detected by the pulse-wave detecting device, a propagation time needed for the pulse wave to propagate from the heart to a position where the pulse-wave detecting device is worn on the subject.]

6. (Currently Amended) A-The system according to claim 4, wherein the pulse-wave-propagation-velocity-relating-information obtaining ~~means device~~ comprises:
 _____ a pulse-wave-propagation-velocity determining ~~means device~~ for determining the propagation velocity at which the pulse wave propagates, by dividing a distance from the heart to a position where the pulse-wave detecting device is worn on the subject by a time difference between the time of the start point of the first heart sound I and the time when the rising point of the pulse wave is detected by the pulse-wave detecting device.]

7. (Currently Amended) A-The system according to claim 4, further comprising:
 _____ an output device which outputs the information obtained by the pulse-wave-propagation-velocity-relating- information obtaining ~~means device~~, so that an observer can observe the output information.


8. (Canceled)

9. (New) The system according to claim 4, wherein said heart-sound detecting apparatus further comprises:

_____ a high-pass filter which passes a component of the heart-sound signal output from the heart-sound microphone, the component having frequencies which are not lower

than a lowest signal-pass frequency of the high-pass filter that is lower, by not less than a prescribed value, than a lowest frequency of the first heart sound I, wherein the smoothing device smoothes, by differentiation, the component of the heart-sound signal which has passed through the high-pass filter.

10. (New) The system according to claim 4, wherein said heart-sound detecting apparatus further comprises:



an electrocardiograph which includes a plurality of electrodes adapted to be worn at a plurality of locations on the subject and which detects, through the electrodes, an electrocardiogram of the subject, wherein the start-point determining device determines, as a start point of a judging period to judge whether the squared amplitude is greater than the prescribed threshold value, a time point during a time period between a Q-wave and an R-wave of the electrocardiogram detected by the electrocardiograph, and determines, during the judging period, the start point of the first heart sound I based on a judgment that the squared amplitude is greater than the prescribed threshold value.

11. (New) The system according to claim 4, wherein the squaring device squares an amplitude of each of a plurality of data points on the smoothed waveform with respect to the base line of the heart-sound signal, and the start-point determining device determines the start point of the first heart sound I based on that the squared amplitude of said each data point is greater than the threshold value.